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S E C R E T RIYADH 001470

NOFORN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/14/2019

TAGS: MASS MOPS SA YM

SUBJECT: MILITARY CLASH ON SAUDI-YEMENI BORDER

Classified By: CDA Susan Ziadeh for reasons 1.4 (b, d)

11. (S/NF) The Embassy received separate notifications from the Saudi Ministry of Interior (MOI) and the Ministry of Defense and Aviation (MODA) of a Saudi military engagement that took place on Tuesday, November 3 with an unspecified number of Yemenis who had crossed into Saudi territory.

12. (S/NF) U.S. Military Training Mission Chief MG Van Sickle received notification of the incident from LTG Al-Faisal, Command of the Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF) at approximately 0900 on Wednesday, Nov. 4. MG Van Sickle reported to Charge Ziadeh the following:

-- LtG. Al-Faisal was informed of the incident by MODA Assistant Minister Prince Khalid bin Faisal with instructions to notify the U.S. Embassy immediately. Al-Faisal provided the following report:

-- Al-Houthi rebels crossed into Saudi Arabia from Yemen on 3 November in the vicinity of Jizan. They clashed with Saudi forces, resulting in a number of Saudi soldiers being killed or wounded.

-- As of 0900 on Nov. 4, the Yemenis were still inside Saudi territory. The Saudi military is moving forces and ordnance into the area. The RSAF indicated they are preparing to launch air strikes against the Yemeni group, NFI.

-- The RSAF requested the suspension of the ongoing U.S.-Saudi Nautical Artist military exercise in Khamis Mushayt and the immediate removal of the 80 DoD personnel participating in the exercise. (Khamis Mushayt is in southwest Saudi Arabia near the Yemeni border.)

-- The Saudi government is not requesting direct assistance from the USG at this time. However, LtG Al-Faisal requested, in light of this situation, that the U.S. accelerate delivery of F-15 sniper pods and renewed the RSAF request for small diameter bombs.

13. (S/NF) GPOC Acting Chief received a report from the MOI at 0300 on Wednesday, 4 November that a group of armed Yemenis had crossed into Saudi Arabia and clashed with Saudi forces at Mt. Dukhan, which according to the MOI is 200-500 meters to the north of the Saudi-Yemeni border. One Saudi soldier was killed and 11 were injured. MOI stressed that air strikes were pending. (See TD-314/073693-09 for further details).  
ZIADEH